

5 June 1957

PROPOSED SAC DEL RIO RELEASE

1. Colonel Hubert Zemke, Commanding Officer 4080th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (Light), announced today that his command has been designated to receive a limited number of Lockheed U-2 aircraft. These aircraft will be assigned to the 4024th and 4029th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadrons (Weather) but will be utilized to support the 3rd Weather Wing of the Air Weather Service by providing meteorological data from altitudes up to 55,000 feet.

2. This will be the first assignment of the U-2 aircraft to a regular Air Force unit. This vehicle has previously been employed by the Air Force in a joint USAF/AEC program and by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics in a world-wide upper atmosphere meteorological research program. Operations in the United States under both programs have been based at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Certain of these activities will be continued at Laughlin Air Force Base in conjunction with the normal operations of the 4080th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing.

3. The NACA program which is of limited duration and partly exploratory in character, has already yielded data of great value. The U-2 aircraft has proved to be highly satisfactory for high altitude research and

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to be more economical than tactical aircraft in the performance of this type of mission. Improved weather instrumentation which can be carried by the U-2 aircraft is being developed as a result of the NACA program. The operation of U-2 aircraft at Laughlin Air Force Base will permit the Air Weather Service to continue this research on a longer term basis. The result should be to improve the service available to both tactical military units and to commercial airlines that employ jet aircraft and require accurate information concerning weather conditions at high altitudes.